

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS
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SUBJ: GOG POSTPONEMENT OF PROSECUTION OF CYPRUS
COUP INSTIGATORS

REF: A. ATHENS 1981 B. STATE 058400

1. INFORMATION AND VIEWS FROM OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH
SEVERAL DEPUTIES, AND OTHER INTELLIGENCE, SUGGEST THAT
PM CARAMANLIS' DECISION TO DELAY THE PRE-TRIAL INVESTIGATION
OF THE PERPETRATORS OF THE CYPRUS COUP WAS PROBABLY BASED
ON A COMBINATION OF CONSIDERATIONS--BOTH DOMESTIC AND
EXTERNAL. OPPOSITION LEADERS WENT ALONG WITH THIS
DECISION BUT MADE IT CLEAR THEY WERE AGREEING TO A SHORT
POSTPONEMENT ONLY. IN FACT, DEMANDS THAT THE MATTER BE
REOPENED ARE ALREADY BEGINNING TO BE HEARD.

2. THE PRIME MINISTER PERSONALLY, OR THROUGH CLOSE
ASSOCIATES, APPROACHED IN ADVANCE THE THREE PRINCIPAL
OPPOSITION LEADERS IN PARLIAMENT AND ASKED THEM TO GO
ALONG WITH THE DECISION TO DELAY THE INVESTIGATION. THEY
ALL GAVE THEIR AGREEMENT AND SAID SO PUBLICLY. ALTHOUGH
THE REASONS GIVEN TO THEM BY CARAMANLIS HAVE NOT LEAKED
OUT, OTHER THAN THE PUBLIC REFERENCE IN GENERAL TERMS TO
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"DISRUPTION OF GREECE'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS", THE PM

MUST HAVE PRESENTED A FORCEFUL CASE. MAVROS, PAPANDREOU AND ILIOU APPARENTLY PUT UP NO SERIOUS ARGUMENTS ABOUT THE DELAY, ALTHOUGH INSISTING IT SHOULD BE SHORT, PROBABLY BECAUSE THEY DID NOT FEEL THIS WAS THE TIME TO FIGHT CARAMANLIS ON SUCH A CONTENTIOUS ISSUE.

3. THIS IS A DELICATE PERIOD IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE POLITICAL SCENE IN GREECE SINCE THE RETURN OF REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT. THE PARLIAMENT IS ABOUT TO ENTER THE FINAL STAGES OF DEBATING THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION. ONE QUESTION STILL LOOMS LARGE AND UNANSWERED--WILL CARAMANLIS CHOOSE TO BECOME PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC WITH DIMINISHED POWERS FOR THE PRIME MINISTER OR WILL HE TRY TO ESTABLISH A CEREMONIAL PRESIDENT AND RETAIN THE REAL POWERS REMAINING AS PRIME MINISTER.

4. RELATED TO THIS IS THE GENERAL SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY AND THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS GREECE FACES, INCLUDING THE STILL SOMEWHAT UNCERTAIN STATUS OF THE ARMED FORCES, AND UPPERMOST, OF COURSE, CYPRUS AND RELATIONS WITH TURKEY. LACK OF VISIBLE PROGRESS TOWARD A CYPRUS SETTLEMENT, FURTHER DETERIORATION OF GREEK RELATIONS WITH TURKEY, OR SERIOUS REVERSES FOR THE GOVERNMENT IN ITS HANDLING OF GREECE'S INTERNAL PROBLEMS COULD SEPARATELY OR IN COMBINATION LEAD CARAMANLIS TO PROPOSE THE FORMATION OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT WITH SOME ELEMENTS OF THE OPPOSITION, OR, IF HE DEEMED THE SITUATION CRITICAL ENOUGH, THE FORMATION OF A CABINET OF NATIONAL UNITY WITH ALL THE OPPOSITION PARTIES.

5. THE PRIME MINISTER HAS CLEARLY NOT DECIDED ON SUCH A STEP AS YET, AND IN VIEW OF THE INHERENT INSTABILITY OF A COALITION CABINET WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE RELUCTANT TO DO SO, BUT THE OPTION EXISTS AND IS BEING DISCUSSED IN GREEK POLITICAL CIRCLES AS A FUTURE POSSIBILITY. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE OPPOSITION HAVE REASON TO DELAY TACKLING A SUBJECT AS CONTROVERSIAL AND DIVISIVE AS PROSECUTION OF IOANNIDES AND HIS COLLEAGUES COULD BECOME.

6. BUT THERE ARE ALSO OTHER CONSIDERATIONS THAT
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UNDoubtedly WERE INVOLVED. A PLAUSABLE ONE IS THAT THE TURKS WOULD BENEFIT FROM ANY REVELATION OF GREEK MILITARY PLANS, TACTICS OR OTHER SECRETS THAT WOULD BECOME PUBLIC AS A RESULT OF THE INVESTIGATION AND TRIAL. OTHERS HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE PROCEEDINGS WOULD ADD FUEL TO THE THEN ALREADY CHARGED ATMOSPHERE IN THE ARMED FORCES OVER DEJUNTION. LESS PLAUSIBLE IS THE STORY MAKING THE ROUNDS HERE THAT CARAMANLIS HAD MADE A SECRET DEAL WITH IOANNIDES THAT IN

RETURN FOR TURNING OVER THE GOVERNMENT TO HIM, CARAMANLIS WOULD NOT PROSECUTE IOANNIDES AND HIS ASSOCIATES.

7. THE REFERENCE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S DESIRE TO AVOID DISRUPTING GREECE'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS HAS BEEN READ BY SOME OBSERVERS TO IMPLY THE INVESTIGATION WOULD PRODUCE ALLEGATIONS BY IOANNIDES AND HIS ASSOCIATES REGARDING FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT IN THE COUP. FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT IN THIS INSTANCE COULD ONLY MEAN CHARGES OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT, SOMETHING WE BELIEVE CARAMANLIS DOES NOT WANT TO SEE. IT IS GENERALLY ASSUMED THAT WHEN IOANNIDES TAKES THE STAND, IF HE DOES, HE WILL TRY TO DEFEND HIS ACTIONS, AT LEAST IN PART, ON THE BASIS OF SOME KIND OF ALLEGED UNDERSTANDING OR ACQUIESCEANCE BY THE U.S. HOWEVER, IT IS HARD TO SEE HOW PAPANDREOU OR ILIOU WOULD GO ALONG WITH THE DELAY ON THE BASIS OF THIS LAST CONSIDERATION ALONE. THEIR WILLINGNESS TO OVERLOOK THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EMBARRASS THE U.S. CAN ONLY BE EXPLAINED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE INTERNAL CONSIDERATIONS WE HAVE DESCRIBED ABOVE.

8. AS WE SUGGESTED AT THE OUTSET, THE OPPOSITION MAY BE REACHING THE POINT WHERE IT CONSIDERS THE DELAY IN THE INVESTIGATION HAS LASTED LONG ENOUGH. WE SHALL SEE WHAT HAPPENS. MEANWHILE, WE WILL CONTINUE TOWATCH THE SITUATION CLOSELY.

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